

## How To Check Your Assessment

You can check your assessment by following one of these two procedures:

If your municipality has been assessed under the Section 63 Reassessment Program, you may compare the market value shown on your Assessment Notice with your estimate of what your property was worth in that same year. Using the correct year is important. The market value estimate shown on your Assessment Notice is for a specific year. The price that you paid for your house five or ten years ago may not be relevant because of price changes in the realty market. Read carefully the Information Insert accompanying your Assessment Notice to make sure that you take the correct year into consideration.

If you are living in a municipality which is not being assessed under the Section 63 Reassessment Program, you can compare the assessments of similar properties in your neighbourhood with your own. You may obtain the information by examining the assessment roll at your local municipal office at any time during office hours. You may also enquire at the Regional Assessment Office, or arrange to visit one of the Open Houses.

The address and telephone number of the Regional Assessment Office is on your Assessment Notice, or available in the Blue Pages of your telephone directory.



## What If It's Wrong?

If you think that something may be wrong with your assessment, or if you require additional information or an explanation, please contact your Regional Assessment Office.

Open Houses — where you can drop in to discuss your assessment with the assessors — will be held at convenient times in your area before the Assessment Roll is officially returned. Any errors can be corrected at this stage. The dates, times and locations of the upcoming Open Houses will be advertised in your local newspapers. As well, if you receive an Assessment Notice, an Information Insert will also include the schedule of Open Houses.

If you require assistance and are unable to attend an Open House in your municipality, please telephone the Regional Assessment Office and make an appointment to talk with the assessor responsible for your neighbourhood. He or she, as a professional trained in property valuation, will be glad to discuss your assessment with you.

## The Right To Appeal

If, after talking with the assessor, you are still unhappy with your assessment, you have the right to appeal to the Assessment Review Board. The procedures for lodging a complaint with the Regional Registrar of the Assessment Review Board are detailed on the back of your Assessment Notice.

If you did not receive an Assessment Notice, you may use an Appeal Procedure Form which is available at your Regional Assessment Office, at Open Houses and at your Municipal Office.

If you have any problems, the Regional Assessment Office will be pleased to help you file your appeal correctly. It is important that you submit your appeal before the deadline shown on the front of your Assessment Notice, or as advertised in your local newspapers; if you do not do so, you lose your right to appeal your assessment for that year.



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# Paying Your Property Taxes On Equal Terms

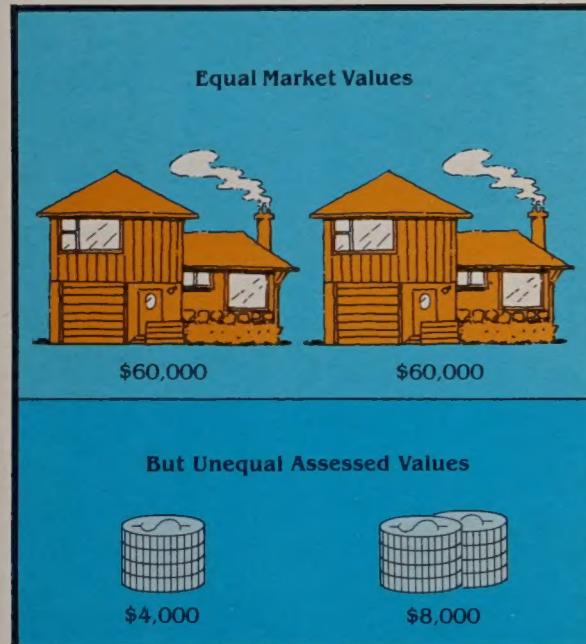


## Are Your Local Taxes Fair?

Right now, you probably don't know whether your property tax bill is fair. The reason? The assessed value appearing on your Assessment Notice doesn't seem to have any logical relationship to what your property is worth, let alone to your tax bill. And yet it is this assessed value which determines your share of municipal and education taxes.

Look at it this way. Let us suppose you and your neighbour each own a home worth \$60,000. You live in the same municipality. Your property, built twenty years ago, is assessed at \$8,000. Your neighbour's property, built only ten years ago, may be assessed at \$4,000. Neither you nor your neighbour know whether or not the assessment is right.

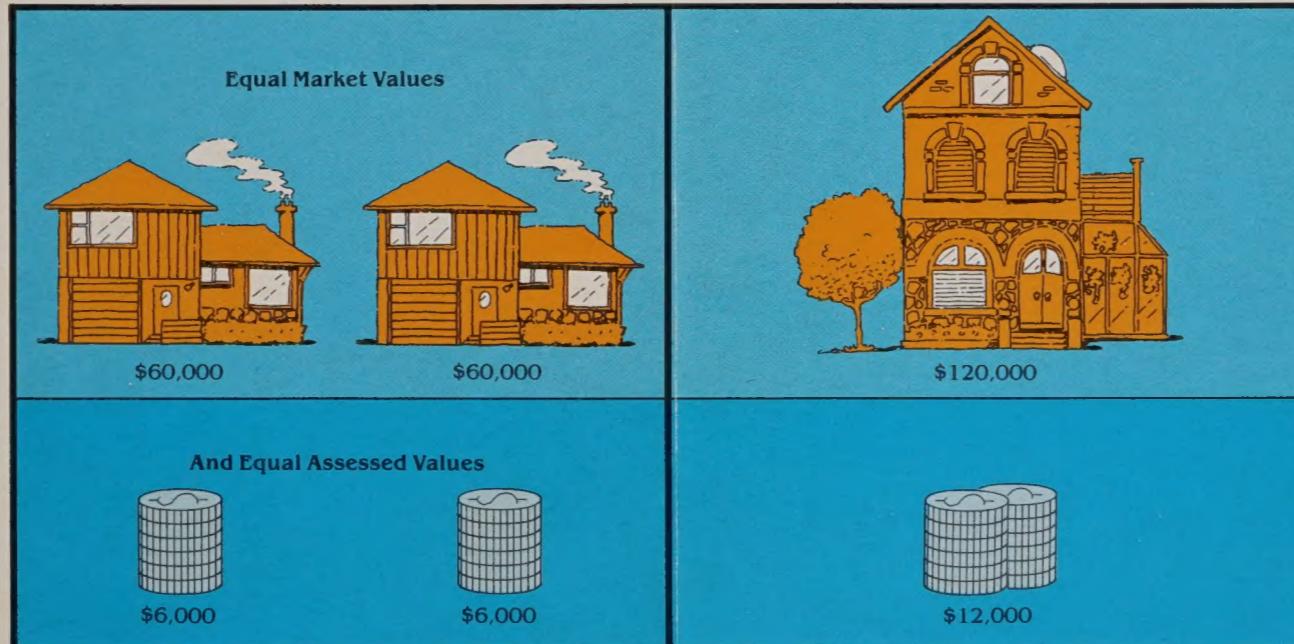
But you end up paying twice as much as your neighbour because his taxes are based on a lower assessment. When the municipality calculates your taxes, it does so by multiplying each property assessment by the same mill rate.



The mill rate is the rate of taxation per \$1,000 of assessment. For example, a mill rate of 124 means that \$124 dollars in taxes will be levied on each \$1,000 of assessment.

Clearly, the assessments and the taxes in this example would not be fair. Similar properties with similar values in the same municipality should be assessed at the same percentage of market value if the property owners are to pay taxes on equal terms. On the other hand, a property worth \$120,000 should be paying twice the taxes of a \$60,000 property — if they are assessed properly.

How can fairness in assessment be achieved so that the owners of similar properties are sure to pay local and school taxes on equal terms?



## The Answer

The answer is the Section 63 Reassessment Program. This may already be underway in your municipality.

If it is not, you should know that this option is available to your municipal council.

The Section 63 Reassessment Program allows property assessors to correct existing assessments so that similar properties of similar value are placed on an equal footing for local tax purposes.

However, it is important to note that *each property class* will continue to bear the same proportion of the total tax burden following the Section 63 reassessment as it did before.

The objectives are solely to achieve fairness within each property class and to protect against tax shifts from one property class to another.

After a Section 63 reassessment, certain property owners within a class, who have been paying more than their fair share, will have both their assessments and their property taxes reduced.

Others, who have been underassessed, will face tax increases. However, there are other property owners who have been properly assessed in the past and whose taxes will not change.

## How To Estimate Your Tax Bill

If your municipal council requests a Section 63 reassessment, you will receive an Assessment Notice and an Information Insert to help you estimate the impact of your new assessment on your taxes, compared with your actual tax bill last year.

Your taxes are the product of your assessment (set by the Regional Assessment Office of the Ministry of Revenue) and the mill rate (set by your municipality). The word "mill" is derived from the Latin word for 1,000; thus one "mill" is equal to 1/1000 of a dollar. The mill rate is used as a rate to raise taxes to fund local services including education.

To calculate your taxes:

- Divide the assessed value of your property by 1,000. (This assessed value is shown on your Assessment Notice, on the Assessment Roll available for inspection at your municipal office, and on your tax bill);
- Multiply this result by the mill rate. An estimated municipal mill rate will be shown on an Information Insert enclosed with your new Assessment Notice. So, if your assessed value is, for example, \$6,000, you can follow these steps:
  - Divide \$6,000 by 1,000 = \$6.
  - Multiply \$6 by the estimated mill rate (let us say, 125 mills) = \$750. Your taxes would be \$750, in this example.